

FEMA Help for Houses of Worship

Tennessee houses of worship and certain other nonprofit organizations in the counties affected by the storms and tornadoes on **March 31 to April 1, 2023**, may be eligible for grants from FEMA's Public Assistance program. The grants can help pay for emergency protective measures, debris removal and restoration of disaster-damaged facilities.

Who is Eligible

- Private nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship, that have sustained storm damage in **Cannon, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Lewis, Macon, McNairy, Rutherford, Tipton** and **Wayne** counties may be eligible for the program.
- The nonprofit organizations must provide a noncritical, essential social service such as community and senior citizen centers.
- Nonprofit organizations must also provide a current ruling letter from the Internal Revenue Service granting tax exemption under Section 501 (c) (d) or (e) of the IRS Code of 1954 or through the State of Tennessee.
- This category of nonprofit must go through the loan application process with the **U.S. Small Business Administration** before FEMA can determine eligibility for its Public Assistance program.
- SBA's low-interest disaster loans provide up to \$2 million for repair or replacement of disaster-damaged property including furniture, fixtures and other essential contents. Houses of worship are not required to accept a loan, but FEMA will not fund repairs unless an SBA loan application is denied or does not fully cover the permanent work costs.
- Insurance settlements can be a factor. FEMA will need to see any insurance policy covering the facility and documentation on any proceeds received. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits; FEMA will cover only expenses not covered by insurance.

Submitting a Request for Public Assistance

- After a major federal disaster declaration, the state holds applicant briefings to inform potential applicants of the assistance available and how to apply. Applicants must then file a Request for Public Assistance, or RPA.
- Houses of worship are encouraged to contact their county emergency management office for more information on how to submit a Request for Public Assistance.

- The application deadline for submitting a Request for Public Assistance is **Saturday, May 6, 2023.**
- Following the approved request, FEMA and the applicants will hold meetings to discuss disaster-caused damage and how to develop the project. Applicants must identify and report their needs by the **May 6** deadline.
- If a project request is approved, FEMA obligates project funds, which are received by the state. The state determines how much of those costs is the applicant's responsibility.

For the latest information on Tennessee's recovery from the severe storms, straight-line winds and tornadoes, visit [FEMA.gov/Disaster/4701](https://www.fema.gov/Disaster/4701). You may also follow [TN.gov/TEMA](https://www.tn.gov/TEMA); [Twitter.com/TEMA](https://twitter.com/TEMA), [Facebook.com/TNDisasterInfo](https://facebook.com/TNDisasterInfo), [@FEMARegion4/Twitter](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4) and [Facebook.com/FEMA](https://facebook.com/FEMA).

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency and/or economic status. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call the Civil Rights Resource line at 833-285-7448.